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Cooper Leaving Post as White House Vietnam and China Expert for Year

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Chester L. Cooper, White House staff expert on Vietnam and China, is leaving that post for a period of writing and research work.

Cooper is departing from the White House staff today, on what is now listed as a year's leave of absence. He will be associated with the Institute for Defense Analyses.

Under the National Security Council staff formerly headed by McGeorge Bundy, Cooper was the principal specialist on Asian affairs. The Vietnamese crisis became his principal assignment, but his absence from the Government will re-

duce the handful of officials in the entire Administration who can be counted as experts on China.

Cooper, who is 49, has been in Government service for 24 years, including 17 years with the Central Intelligence Agency. He originally was assigned to the Bundy staff as the CIA representative, then became a regular White House official in 1964.

His expertise on China dates back to wartime service in China, 1943-45, with a team of Office of Strategic Services agents who worked with escaped Chinese and Korean prisoners. His academic specialty before the war was eco-

nomic history, which he studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, New York University and Columbia University, from which he received his doctorate.

Cooper joined the CIA in 1947 as an analyst on China and eventually became a member of the Board of National Estimates. He was one of the few officials remaining in the Government who participated in the 1964 Geneva conference that ended the war in French Indochina.

President Johnson recently announced that Robert W. Komer will coordinate Vietnamese affairs on the White House staff.